

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

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DRAFTED BY: S/S:FVORTIZ:GK

APPROVED BY: S/S:ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 100723 TOSEC 110138

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT AMMAN 2223 ACTION SECSTATE 26 APR 76.

QUOTE

S E C R E T AMMAN 2223

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,SY, IS, UNDOF, XF

SUMMARY: RIFAI THINKS SYRIANS WILL RENEW UNDOF MANDATE.
PROBLEM IS STILL FINDING A FACE SAVER. RIFAI LEFT ME
WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT ASAD BADLY WANTS TO RENEW, HAS
NOT YET FOUND A FORMULA, AND IS LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING
WITH KING HUSSEIN MAY 4 TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE FURTHER.
END SUMMARY.

1. RIFAI TOLD ME APRIL 26 THAT IT WAS HIS IMPRESSION
THAT, FOLLOWING HIS RECENT TALK WITH ASAD ASAD WANTED TO FIND
A WAY TO RENEW UNDOF MANDATE. RIFAI TOLD ASAD THAT
JORDANIANS HAD INFORMED THE PRESIDENT IT WAS THEIR
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VIEW THAT PRESIDENT ASAD WANTED TO RENEW THE MANDATE

BUT BADLY NEEDED SOME KIND OF FACE SAVER TO DO SO. HE SAID ASAD DID NOT OBJECT TO THIS SUMMATION.

2. I PRESSED RIFAI ON WHAT KIND OF ARRANGEMENTS ASAD MIGHT ACCEPT. RIFAI SAID "WELLL WE SUGGESTED A NUMBER OF THESE TO YOU." I TOLD RIFAI THAT HE SHOULD KNOW THAT THE U.S. WAS NOT GOING TO TURN AROUND AND ACCEPT THE RESOLUTION WHICH WE VETOED IN JANUARY. THIS WAS THE KIND OF CONFRONTATION OVER THE ISSUE WHICH WE SHOULD AVOID AND WHICH WOULD JUST MAKE MATTERS WORSE. IT WAS LIKE ASKING ASAD RIGHT NOW TO TURN AROUND AND PATCH THINGS UP WITH SADAT OR WITH THE IRAQIS. IT IS SOMETHING THAT COULD NOT BE DONE.

3. RIFAI SAID HE ACCEPTED THAT POINT. PERHAPS THERE WOULD BE AN IRAQI CRISIS. IRAQ HAD CUT OFF ITS CRUDE OIL SUPPLY TO SYRIA. THERE WAS SOME INFORMATION THAT IRAQ WAS MASSING TROOPS IN ITS BORDER WITH SYRIA POSSIBLY OUT OF FEAR OF A SYRIAN RIPOSTE FOR THE IRAQI OIL CUTOFF. MAYBE THE IRAQI EXCUSE COULD BE DUG UP AGAIN. RIFAI ALSO MENTIONED THAT MAYBE ASAD COULD RELY ON THE LEBANESE SITUATION TO AFFECT A RENEWAL. HE HOPED THAT ASAD COULD AT THE TIME OF THE RENEWAL ALSO CLAIM SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN LEBANON TO PERMIT THE RENEWAL TO TAKE PLACE.

4. RIFAI SAYS KING HUSSEIN WILL BE VISITING ASAD IN DAMASCUS IN THE FIRST WEEK IN MAY, POSSIBLY MAY 4, AND THE MANDATE RENEWAL WILL BE A SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION AT THAT TIME.

5. SUGGEST DEPARTMENT PASS DAMASCUS. PICKERING UNQUOTE SISCO

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, AGREEMENTS, CAT-C, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCES, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: vogelfj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE100723
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: S/S:FVORTIZ:GK
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: N760003-0498
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760421/aaaaarwm.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: vogelfj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 OCT 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <17 JUN 2004 by izenbei0, 3.4.X6>; RELEASED <14 OCT 2004 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <20 OCT 2004 by vogelfj>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RIFAI THINKS SYRIANS WILL RENEW UNDOF MANDATE
TAGS: PFOR, SY, IS, XF, UNDOF, (ASAD, HAFIZ), (RIFAI, ZAYD)
To: SECRETARY DAMASCUS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006